SPAWN
THE DARK AGES

1 OF 6
NOV
DIGITAL EDITION

SHARP

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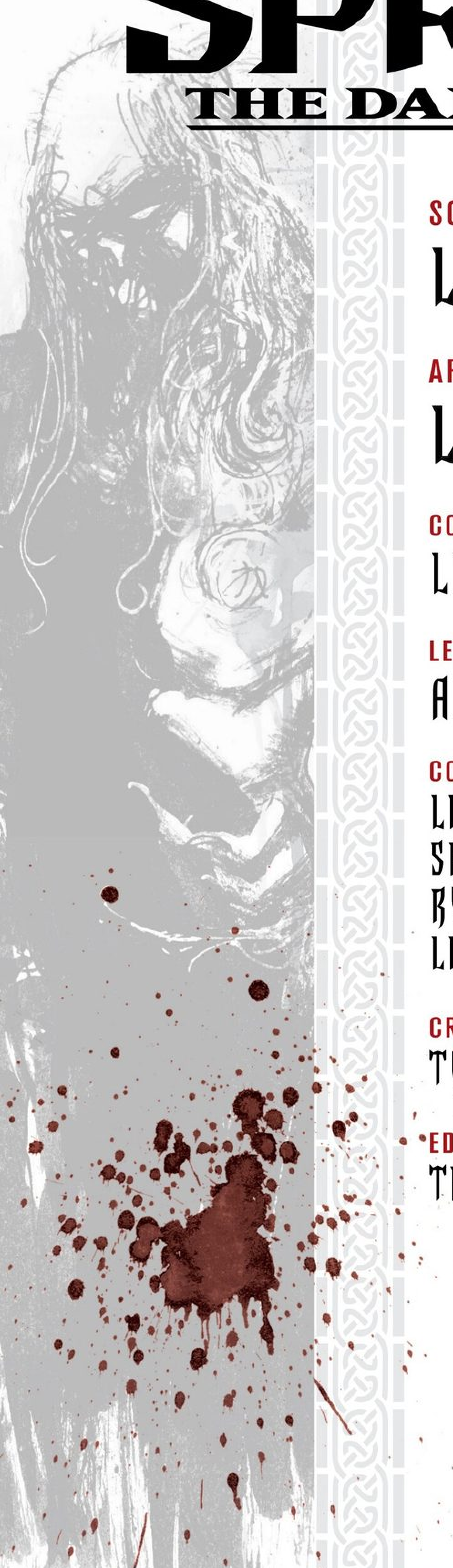

SCRIPT/PLOT
LIAM McCORMACK SHARP

ART
LIAM McCORMACK SHARP

COLOR
LIAM McCORMACK SHARP

LETTERING
ANDWORLD DESIGN

COVERS
LIAM McCORMACK SHARP - COVER A & C
SKETCH BLANK - COVER B
RYAN BROWN - COVER D
LIAM SHARP and TODD McFARLANE - COVER E

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
TODD McFARLANE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
THOMAS HEALY

Publishing Coordinator
YVETTE ARTEAGA

Production Artists
RYAN KEIZER
IMANI DAVIS
ZABRIEL KENNEDY

Publisher for
Image Comics/
Chief Creative Officer
ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY
TODD McFARLANE

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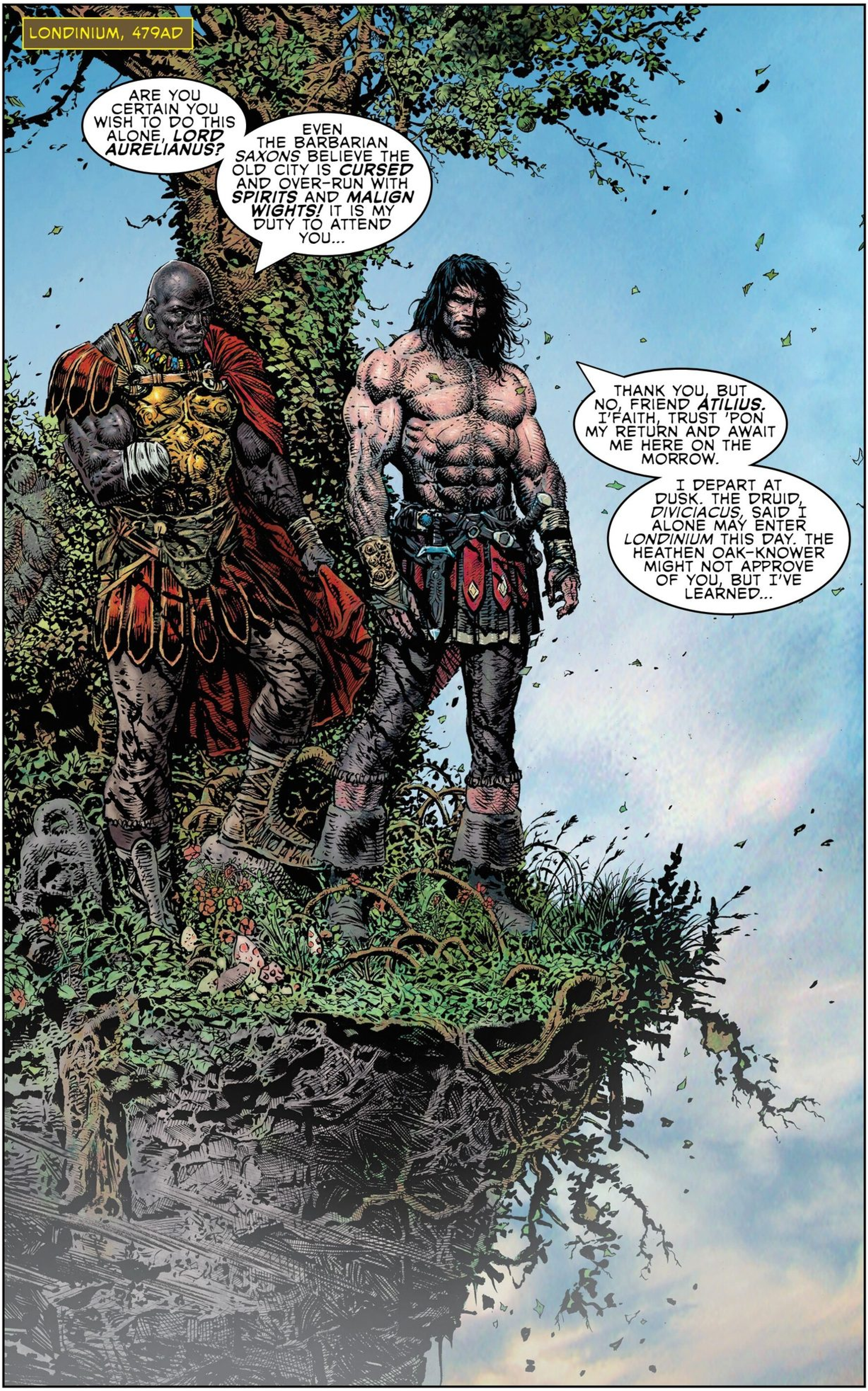
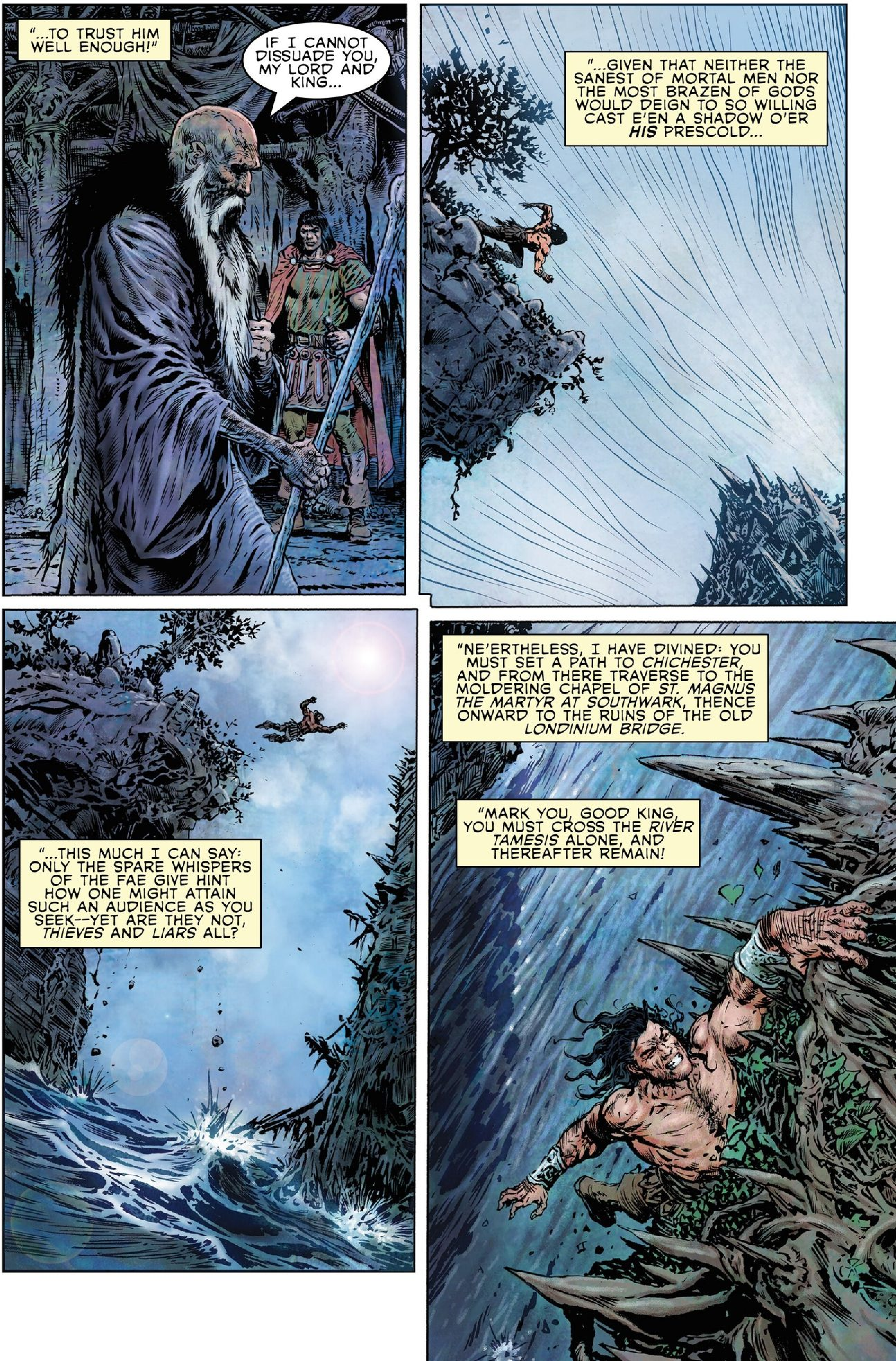
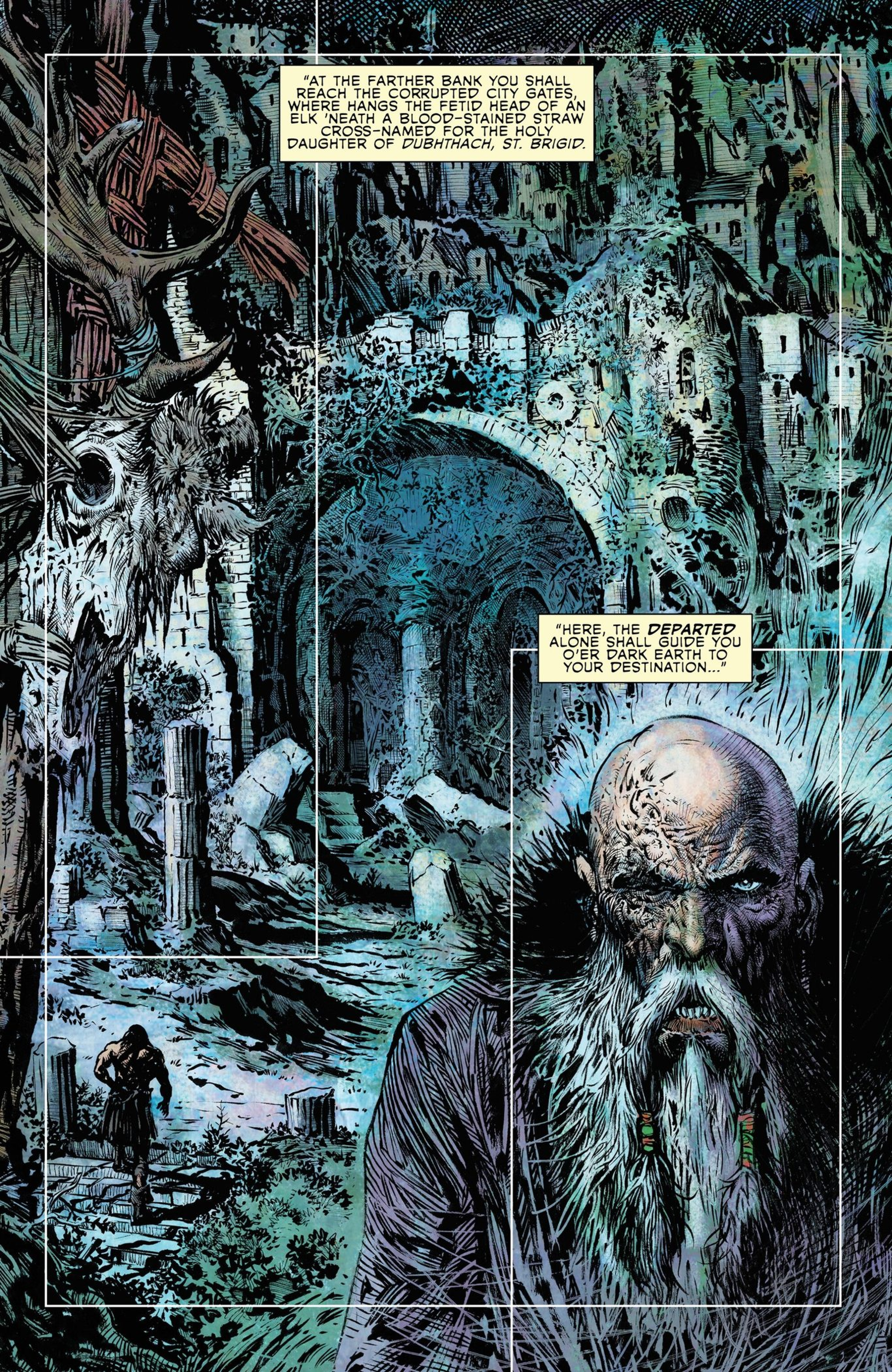
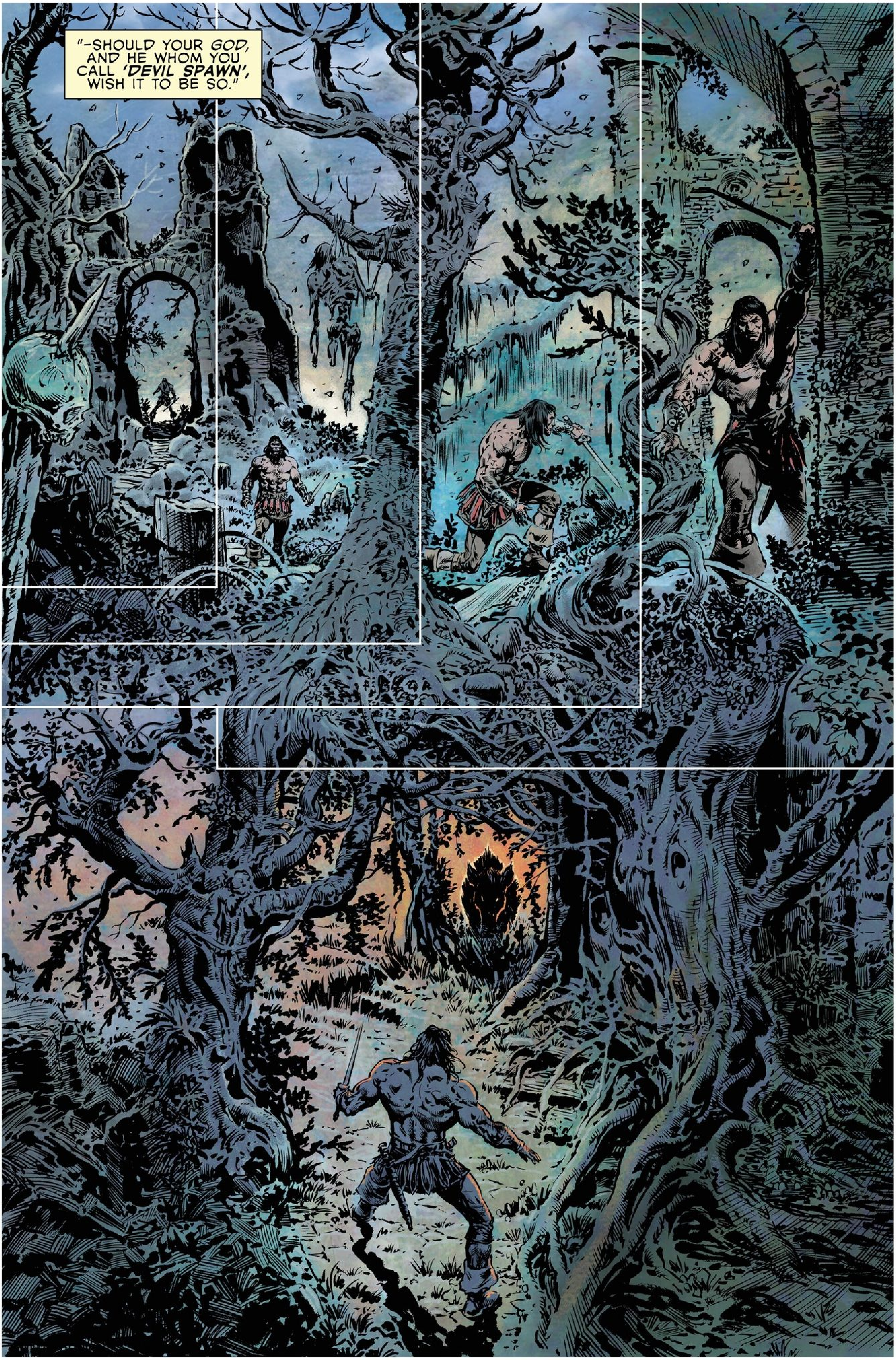
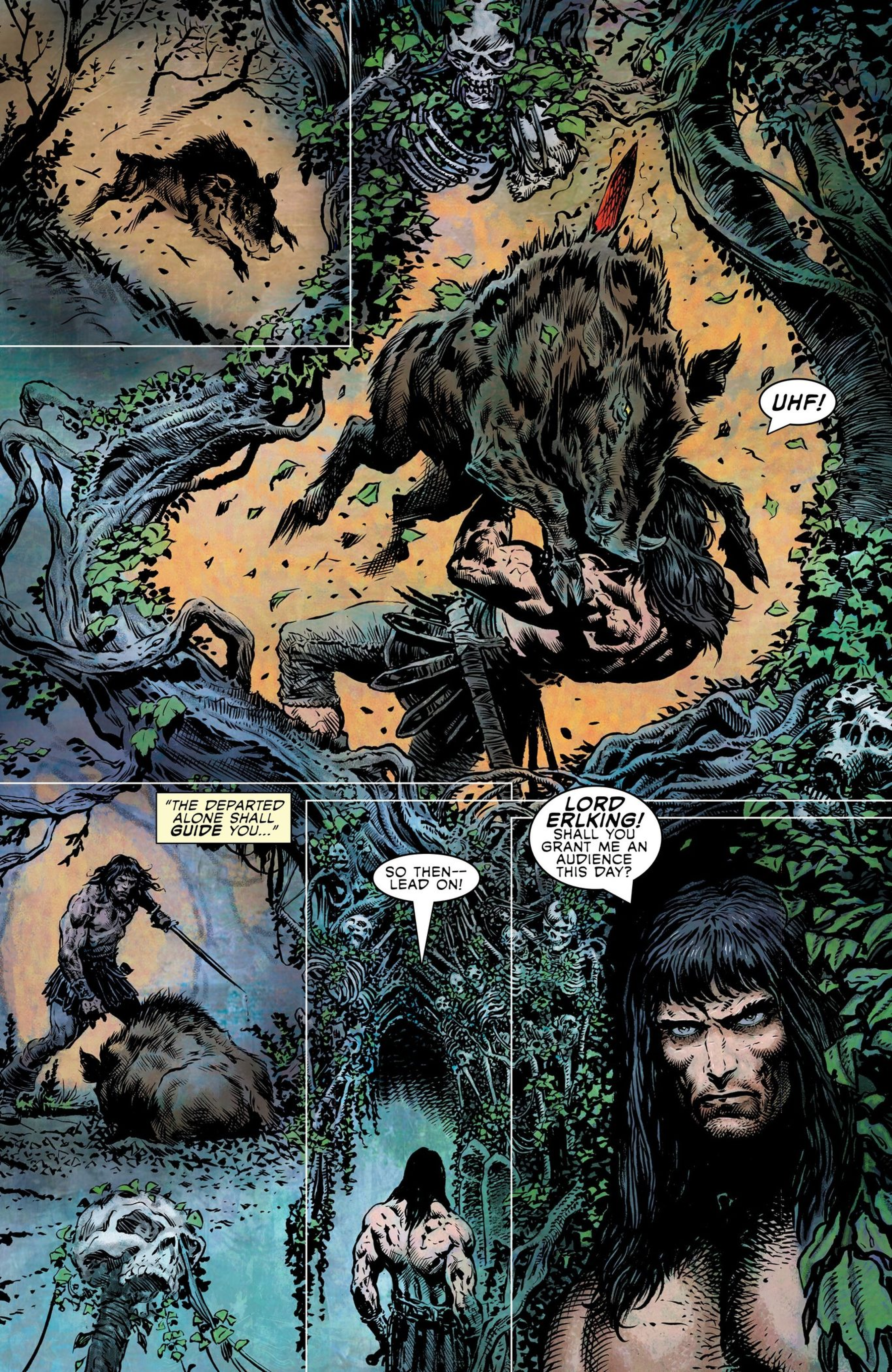
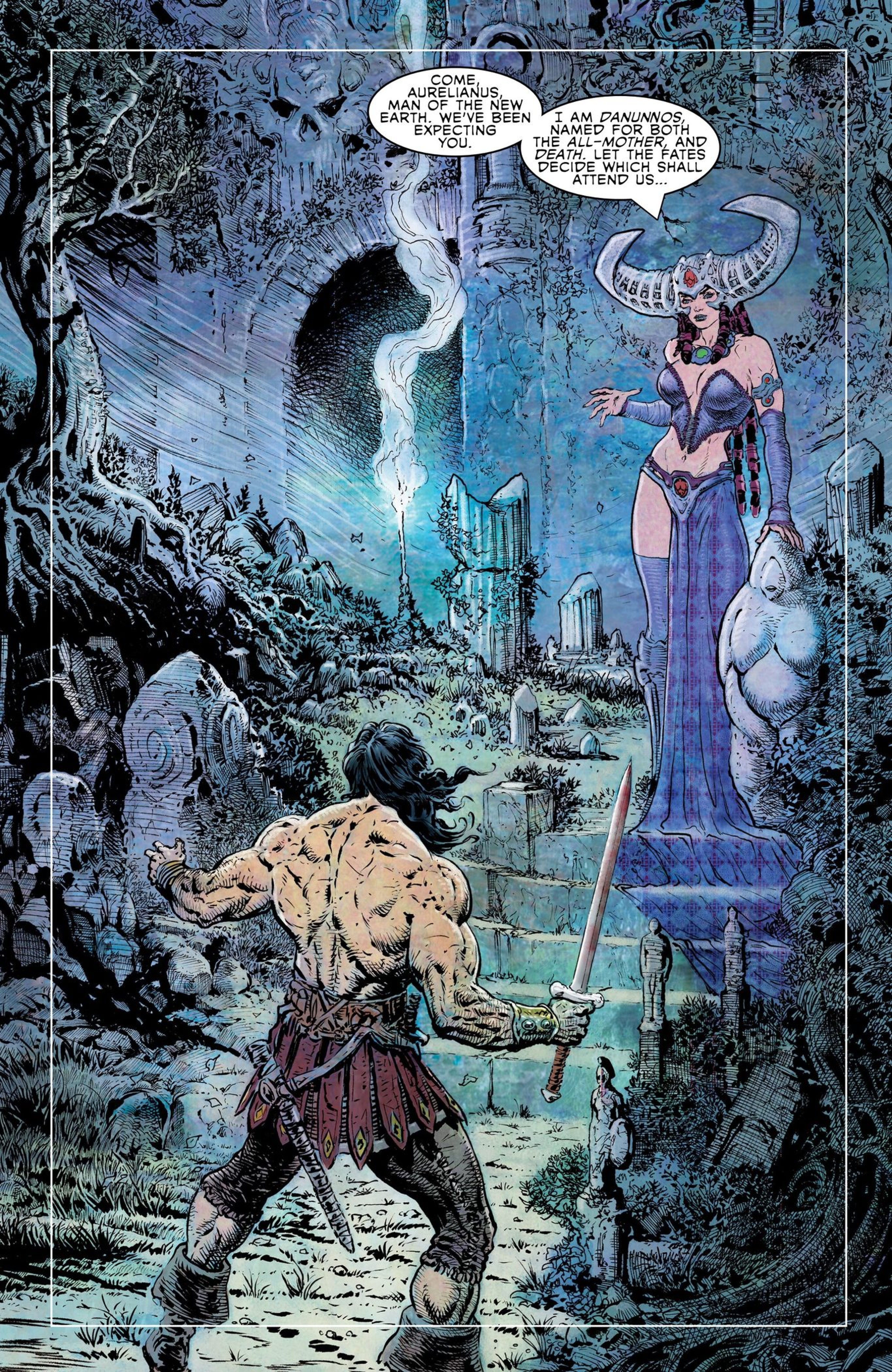

LONDINIUM, 479AD
ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU WISH TO DO THIS ALONE, LORD AURELIANUS?
EVEN THE BARBARIAN SAXONS BELIEVE THE OLD CITY IS CURSED AND OVER-RUN WITH SPIRITS AND MALIGN WIGHTS! IT IS MY DUTY TO ATTEND YOU...
THANK YOU, BUT NO, FRIEND ATILIUS. I'FAITH, TRUST 'PON MY RETURN AND AWAIT ME HERE ON THE MORROW.
I DEPART AT DUSK. THE DRUID, DIVICIACUS, SAID I ALONE MAY ENTER LONDINIUM THIS DAY. THE HEATHEN OAK-KNOWER MIGHT NOT APPROVE OF YOU, BUT I'VE LEARNED...

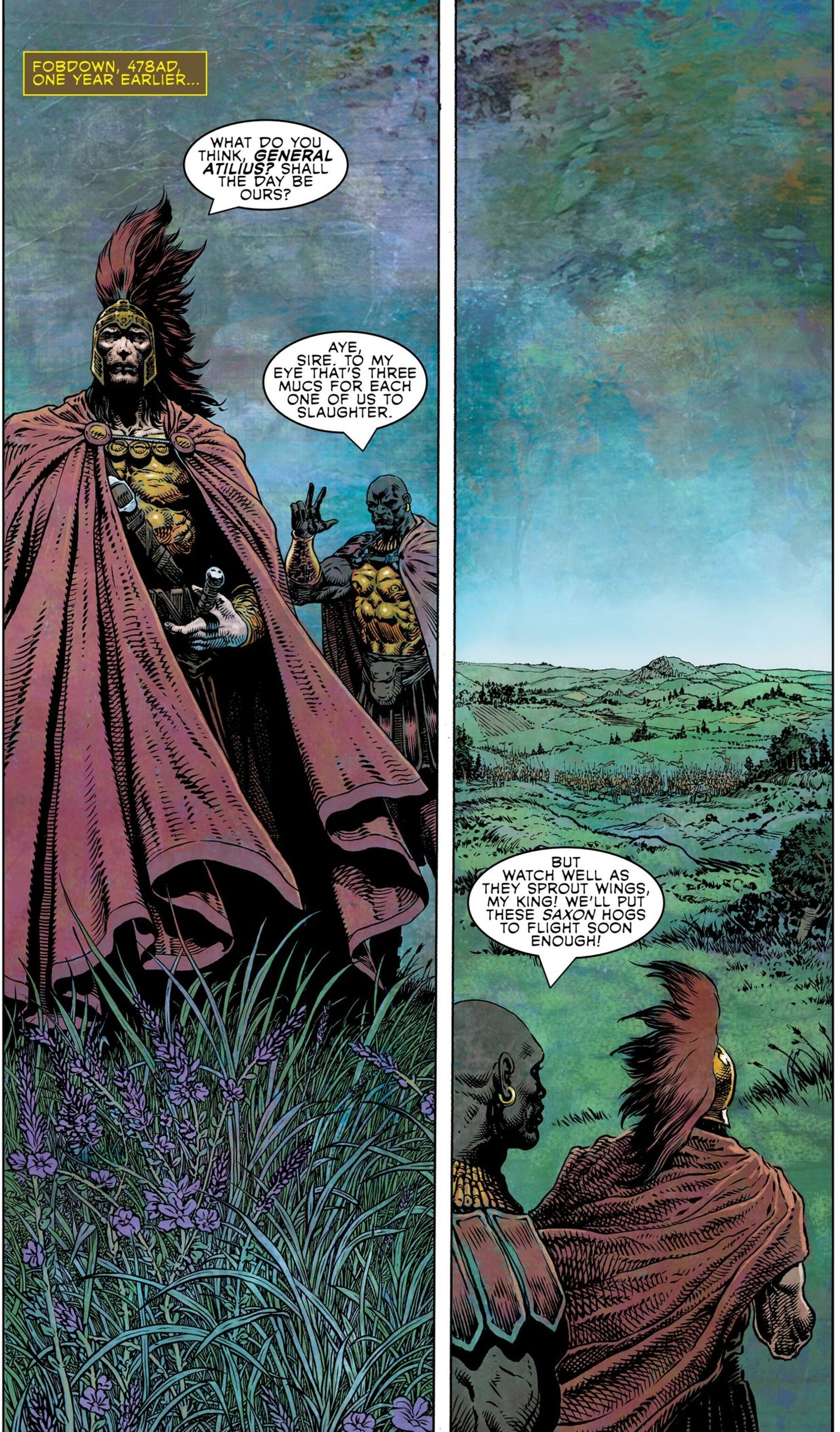

"...TO TRUST HIM WELL ENOUGH!"
IF I CANNOT DISSUADE YOU, MY LORD AND KING...
"...GIVEN THAT NEITHER THE SANEST OF MORTAL MEN NOR THE MOST BRAZEN OF GODS WOULD DEIGN TO SO WILLING CAST E'EN A SHADOW O'ER *HIS* PRESCOLD...
"...THIS MUCH I CAN SAY: ONLY THE SPARE WHISPERS OF THE FAE GIVE HINT HOW ONE MIGHT ATTAIN SUCH AN AUDIENCE AS YOU SEEK--YET ARE THEY NOT, *THIEVES* AND *LIARS* ALL?'
"NE'ERTHELESS, I HAVE DIVINED: YOU MUST SET A PATH TO *CHICHESTER*, AND FROM THERE TRAVERSE TO THE MOLDERING CHAPEL OF *ST. MAGNUS THE MARTYR AT SOUTHWARK*, THENCE ONWARD TO THE RUINS OF THE OLD *LONDINIUM BRIDGE*.
"MARK YOU, GOOD KING, YOU MUST CROSS THE *RIVER TAMESIS* ALONE, AND THEREAFTER REMAIN!

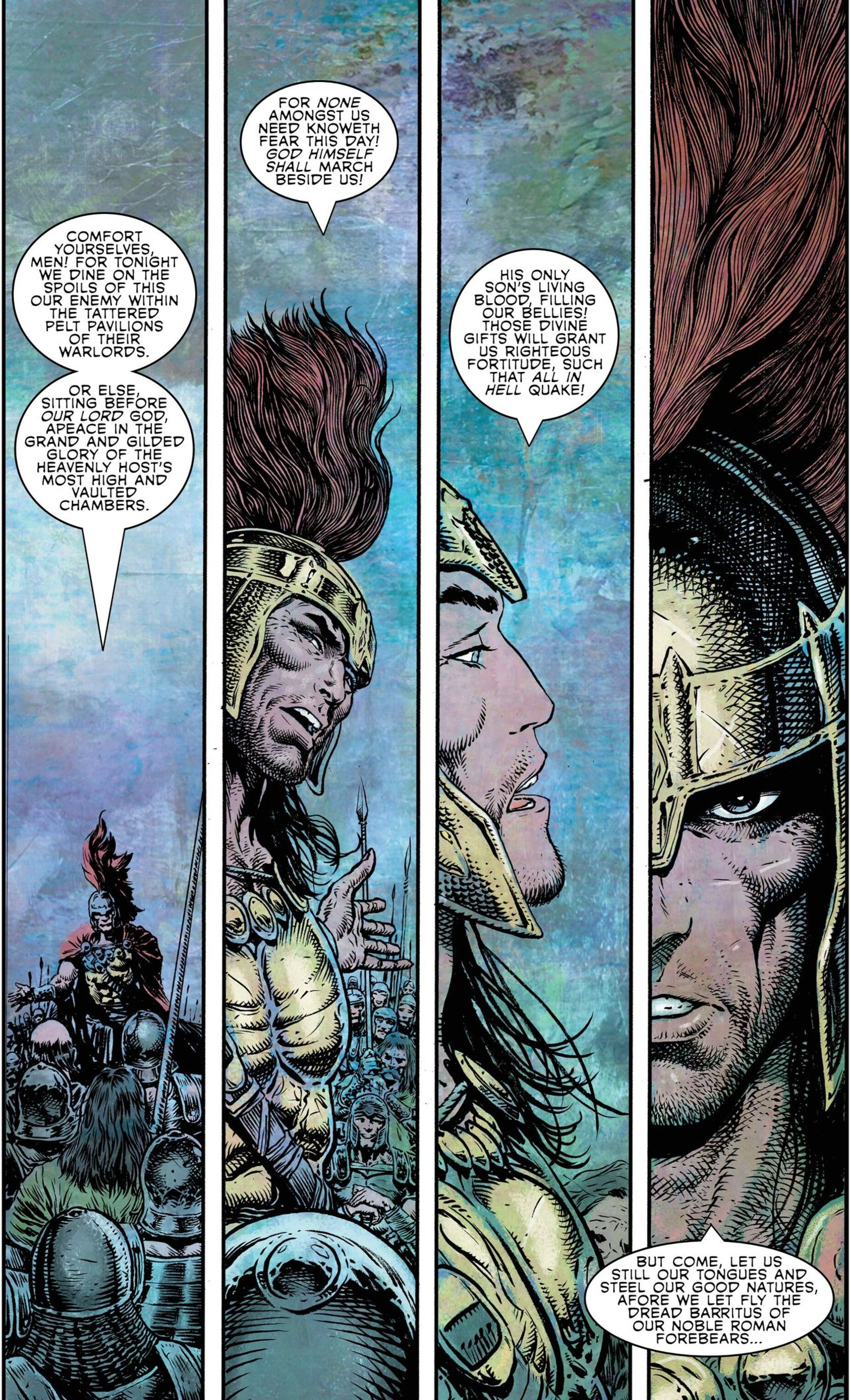

"AT THE FARTHER BANK YOU SHALL REACH THE CORRUPTED CITY GATES, WHERE HANGS THE FETID HEAD OF AN ELK 'NEATH A BLOOD-STAINED STRAW CROSS–NAMED FOR THE HOLY DAUGHTER OF *DUBHTHACH, ST. BRIGID.*
"HERE, THE ***DEPARTED*** ALONE SHALL GUIDE YOU O'ER DARK EARTH TO YOUR DESTINATION..."

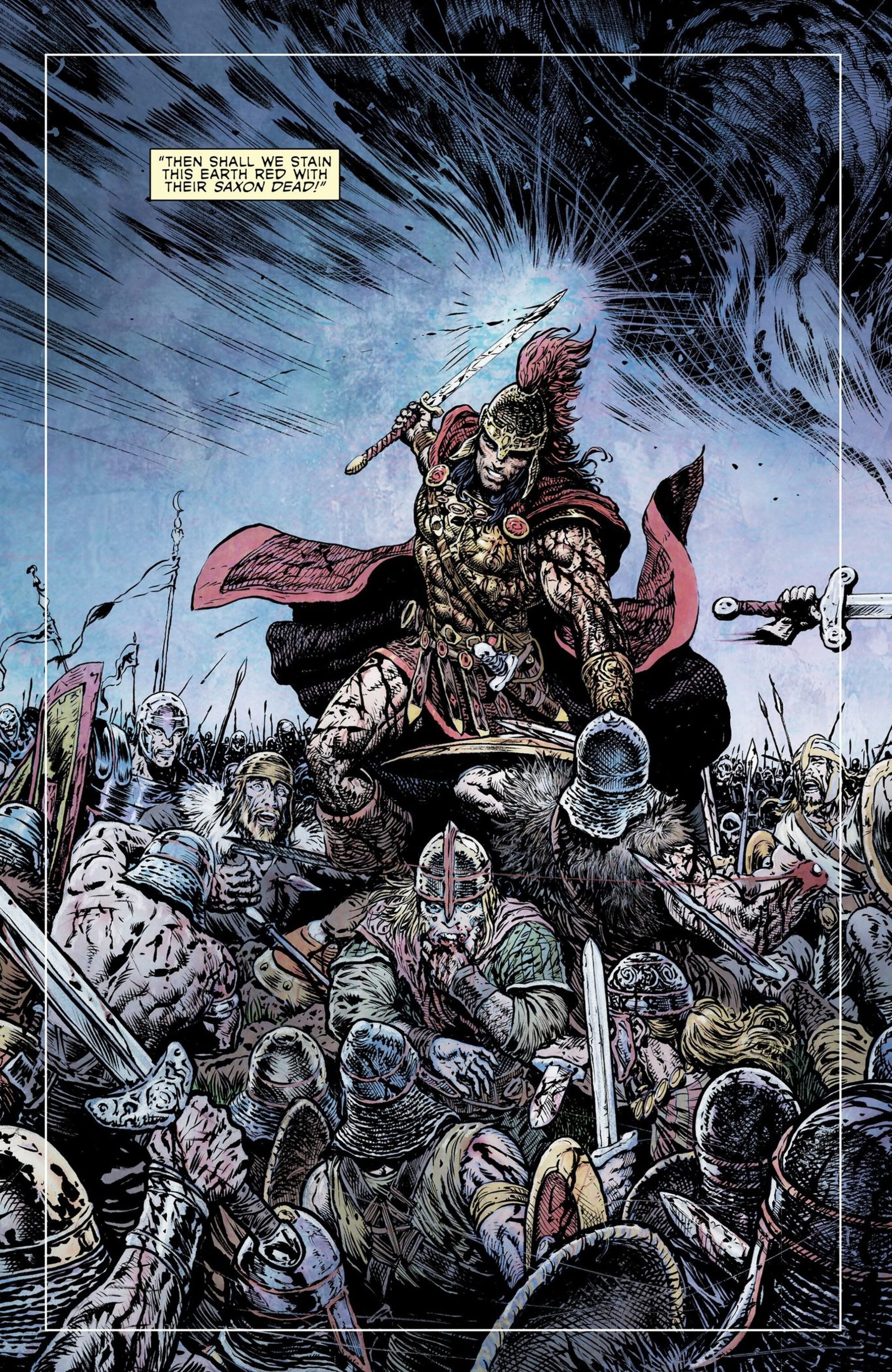

"–SHOULD YOUR *GOD*, AND HE WHOM YOU CALL ***'DEVIL SPAWN'***, WISH IT TO BE SO."

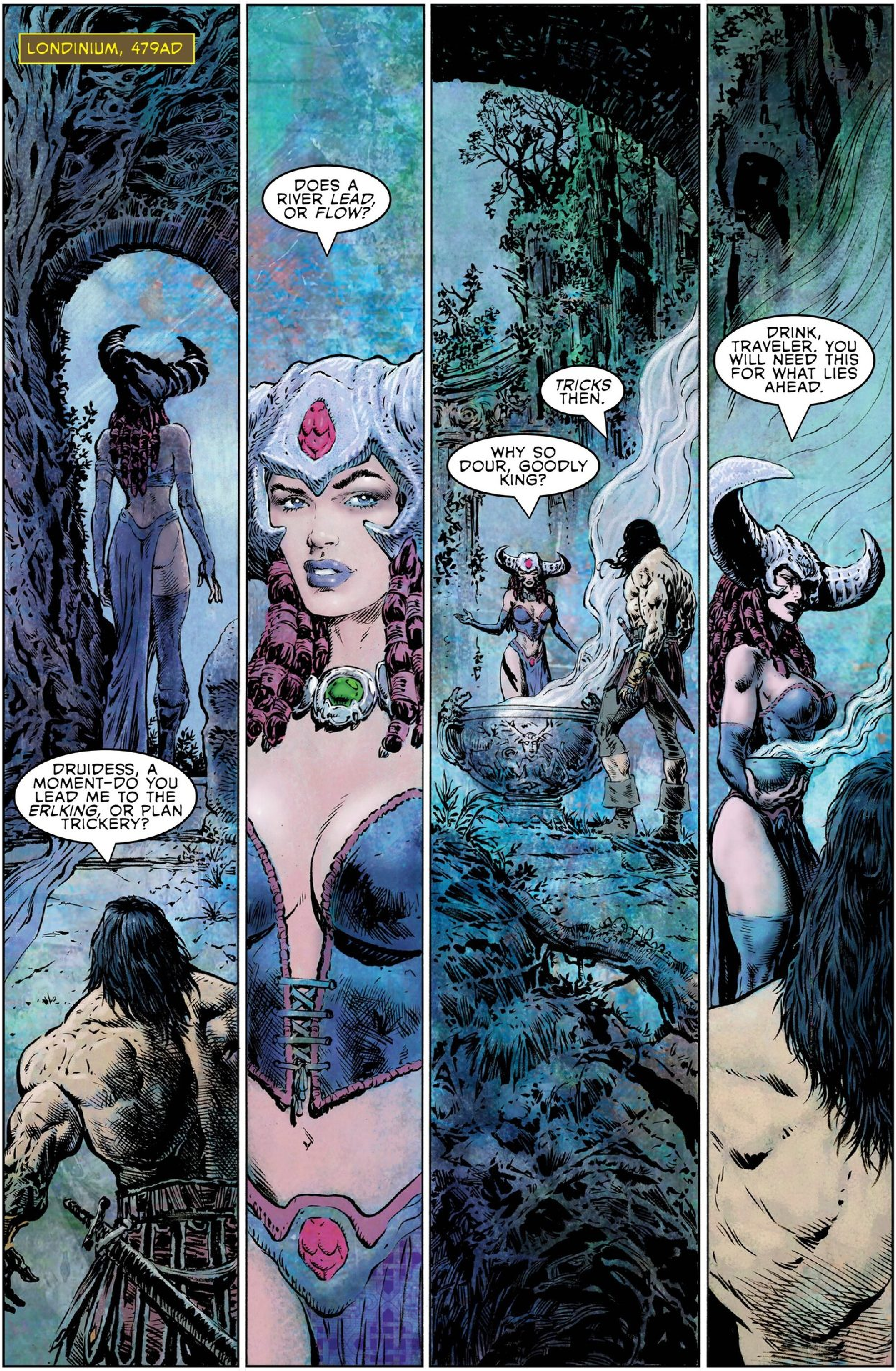

UHF!
"THE DEPARTED ALONE SHALL GUIDE YOU..."
SO THEN-- LEAD ON!
LORD ERLKING! SHALL YOU GRANT ME AN AUDIENCE THIS DAY?

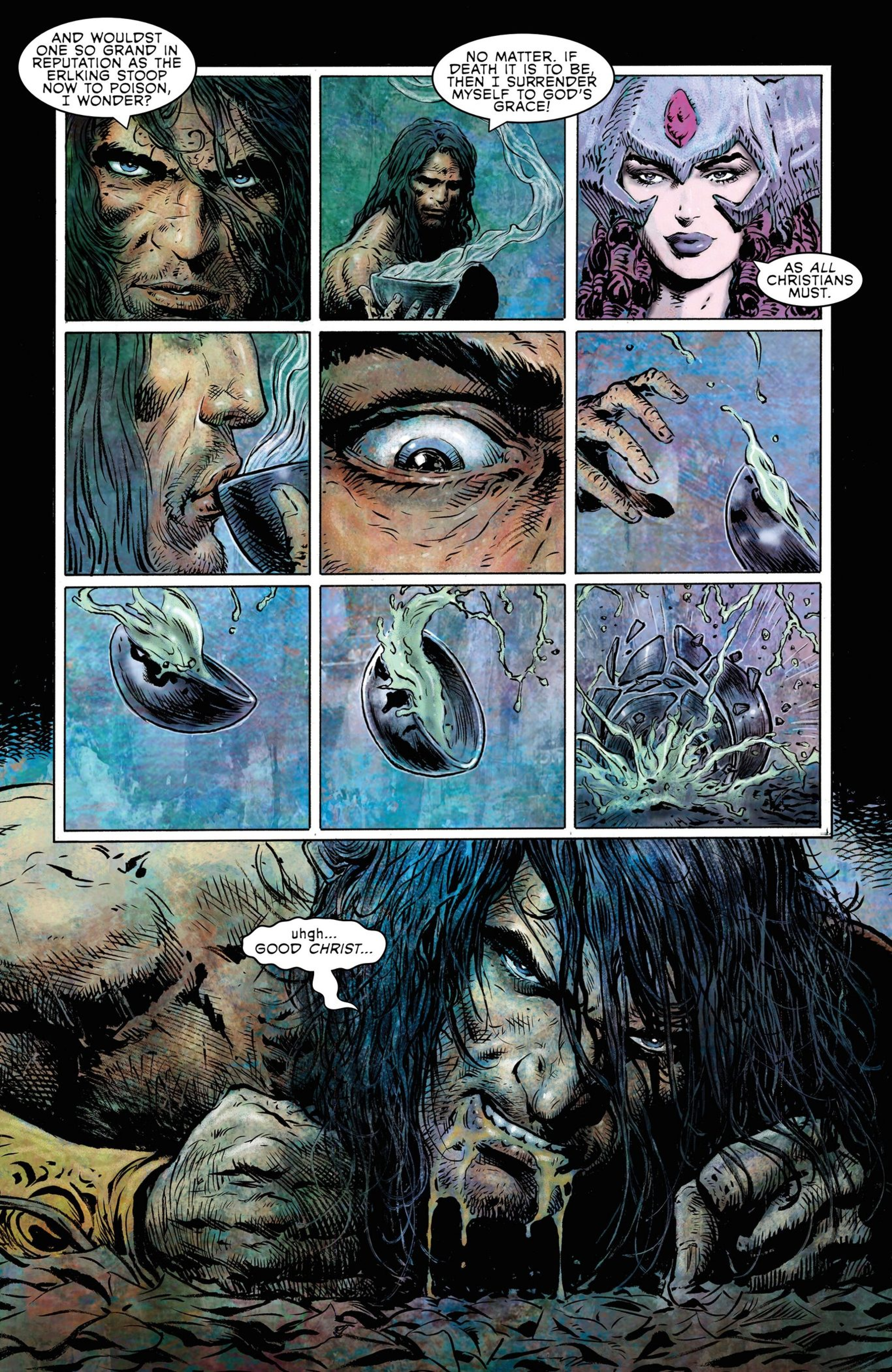

COME, AURELIANUS, MAN OF THE NEW EARTH. WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
I AM *DANUNNOS*, NAMED FOR BOTH THE *ALL-MOTHER*, AND *DEATH*. LET THE FATES DECIDE WHICH SHALL ATTEND US...

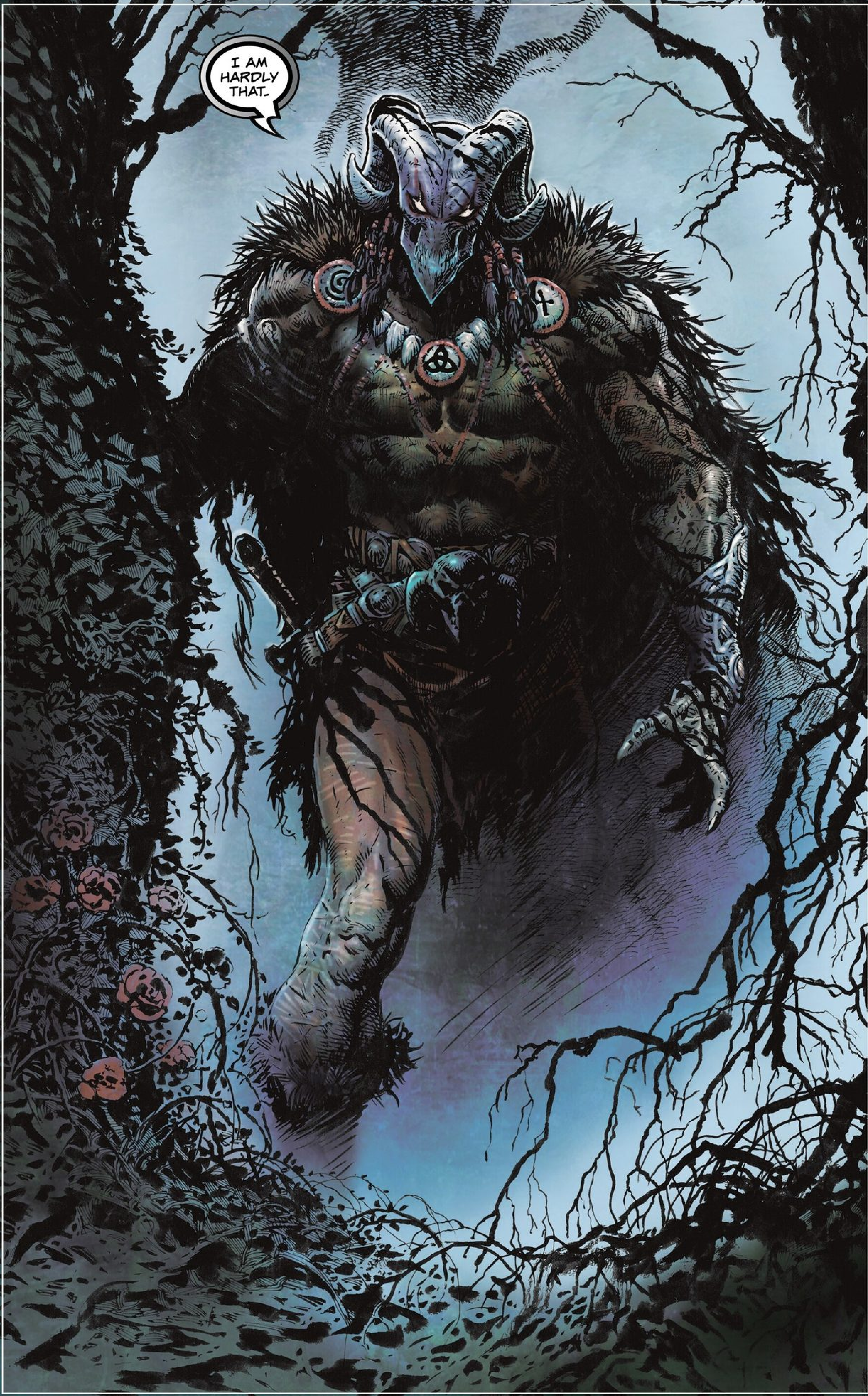

FOBDOWN, 478AD, ONE YEAR EARLIER...
WHAT DO YOU THINK, GENERAL ATILIUS? SHALL THE DAY BE OURS?
AYE, SIRE. TO MY EYE THAT'S THREE MUCS FOR EACH ONE OF US TO SLAUGHTER.
BUT WATCH WELL AS THEY SPROUT WINGS, MY KING! WE'LL PUT THESE SAXON HOGS TO FLIGHT SOON ENOUGH!

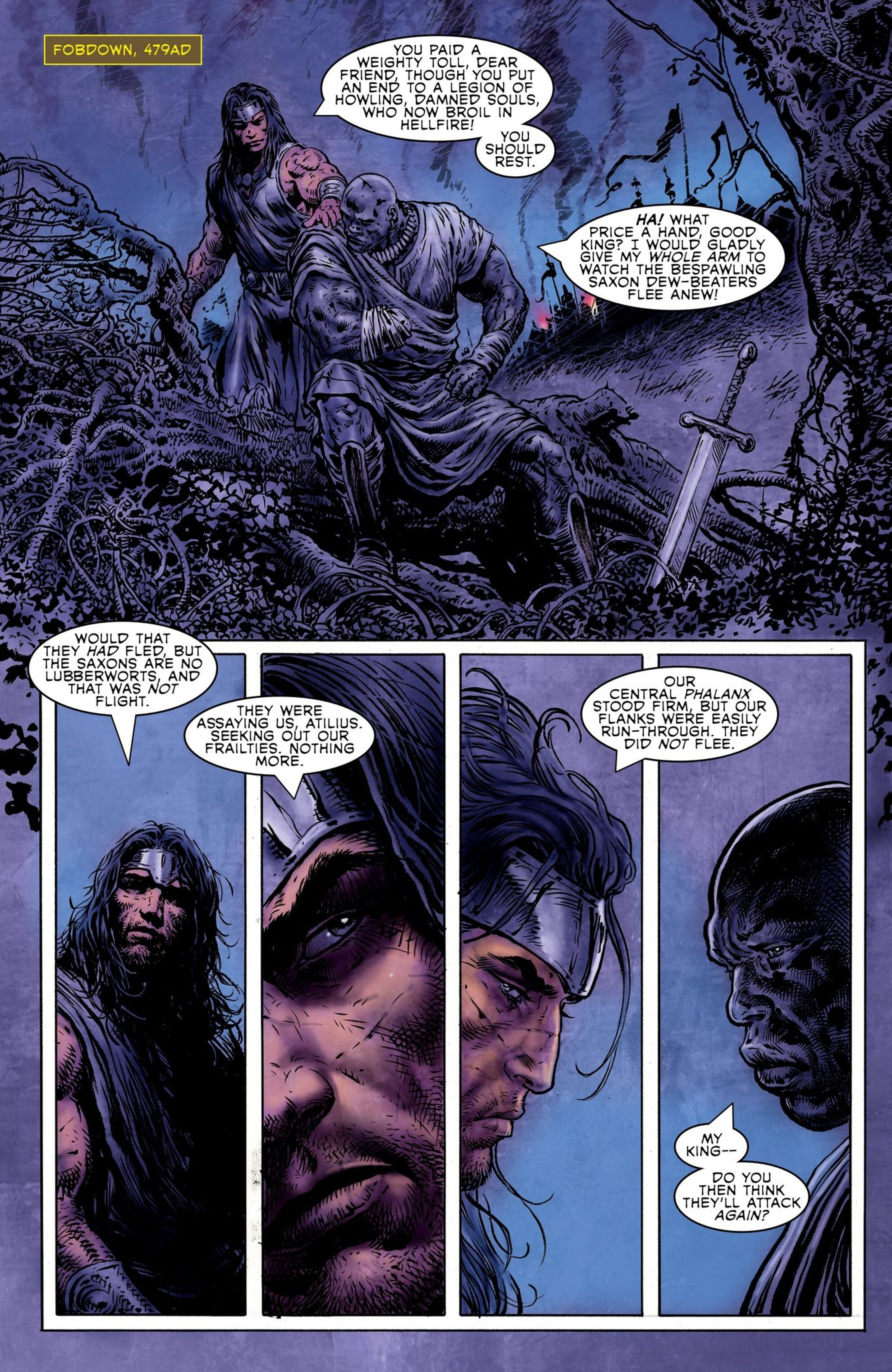

COMFORT YOURSELVES, MEN! FOR TONIGHT WE DINE ON THE SPOILS OF THIS OUR ENEMY WITHIN THE TATTERED PELT PAVILIONS OF THEIR WARLORDS.
OR ELSE, SITTING BEFORE *OUR LORD* GOD, APEACE IN THE GRAND AND GILDED GLORY OF THE HEAVENLY HOST'S MOST HIGH AND VAULTED CHAMBERS.
FOR *NONE* AMONGST US NEED KNOWETH FEAR THIS DAY! *GOD HIMSELF SHALL* MARCH BESIDE US!
HIS ONLY SON'S LIVING BLOOD, FILLING OUR BELLIES! THOSE DIVINE GIFTS WILL GRANT US RIGHTEOUS FORTITUDE, SUCH THAT *ALL IN HELL* QUAKE!
BUT COME, LET US STILL OUR TONGUES AND STEEL OUR GOOD NATURES, AFORE WE LET FLY THE DREAD BARRITUS OF OUR NOBLE ROMAN FOREBEARS...

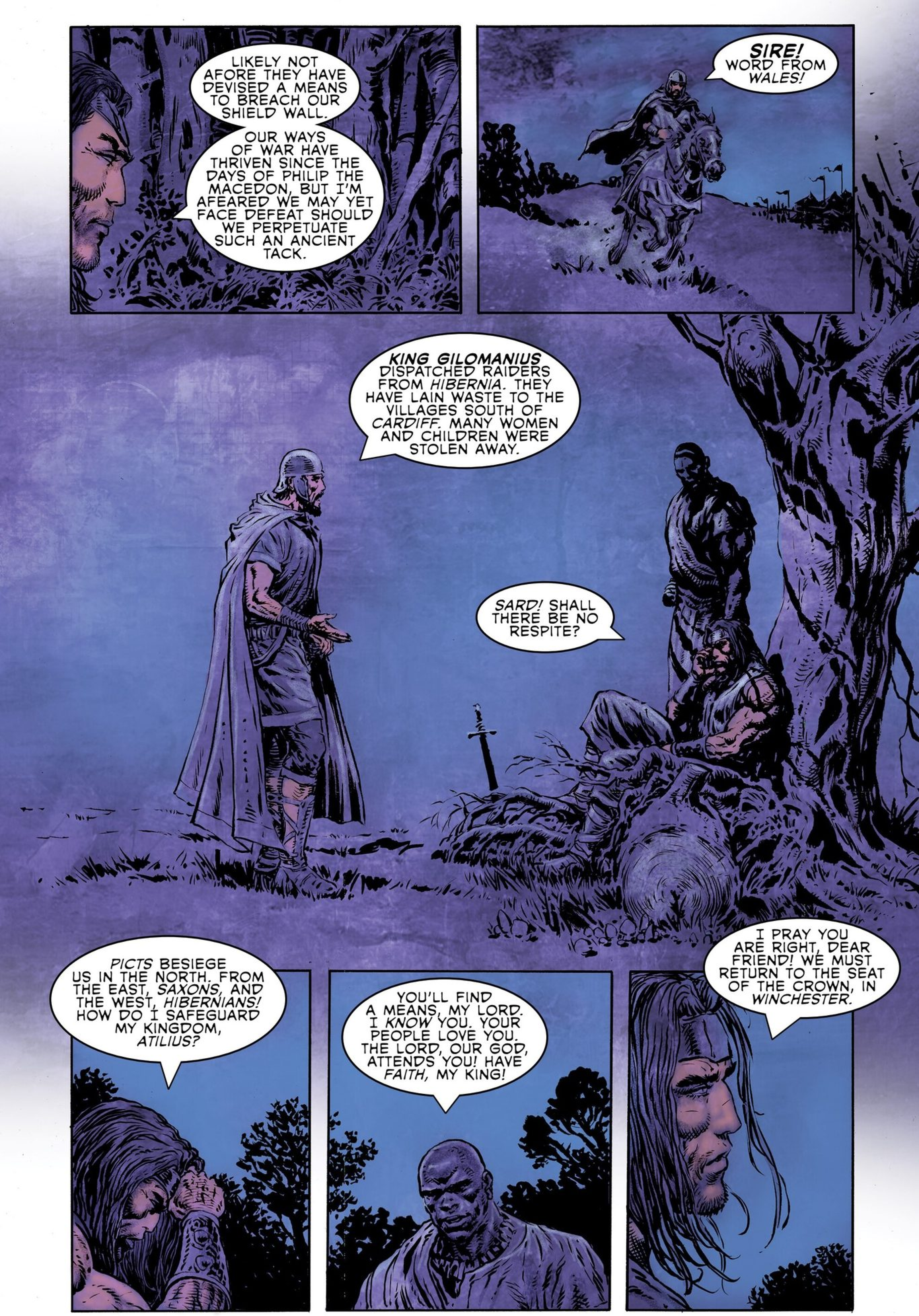

"THEN SHALL WE STAIN THIS EARTH RED WITH THEIR *SAXON DEAD!*"

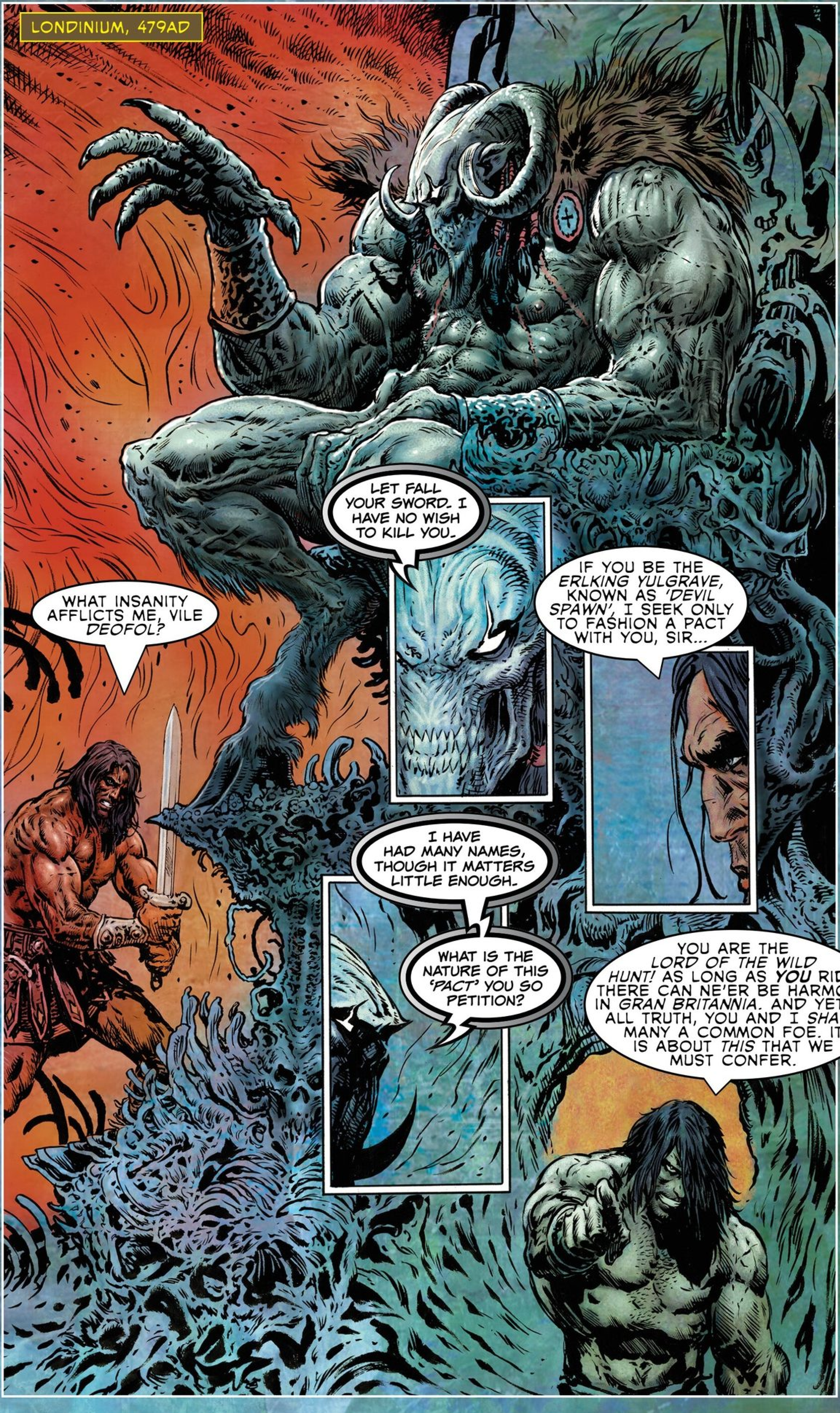

LONDINIUM, 479AD
DRUIDESS, A MOMENT–DO YOU LEAD ME TO THE *ERLKING*, OR PLAN TRICKERY?
DOES A RIVER *LEAD*, OR *FLOW*?
TRICKS THEN.
WHY SO DOUR, GOODLY KING?
DRINK, TRAVELER. YOU WILL NEED THIS FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD.

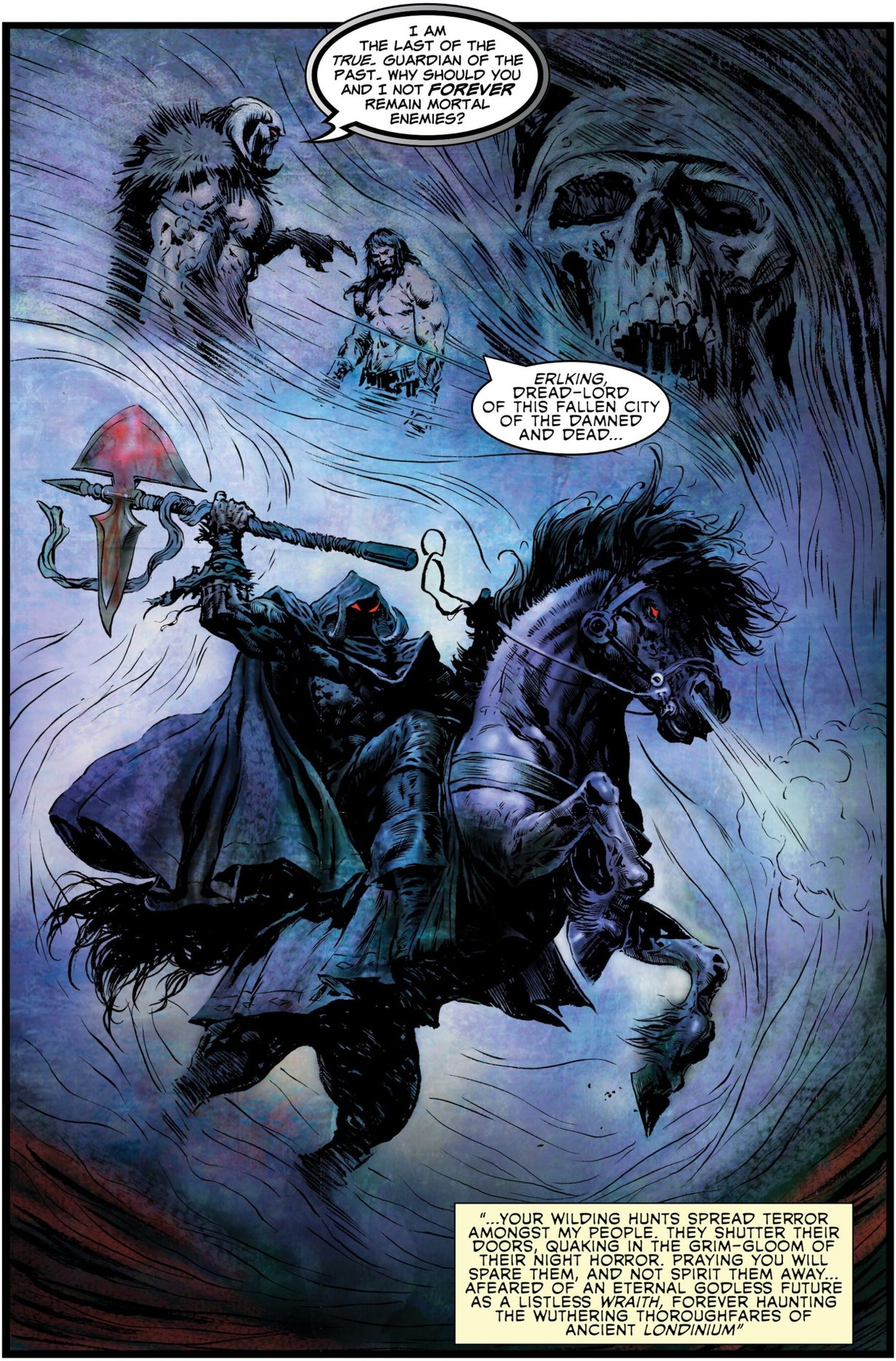

AND WOULDST ONE SO GRAND IN REPUTATION AS THE ERLKING STOOP NOW TO POISON, I WONDER?
NO MATTER. IF DEATH IT IS TO BE, THEN I SURRENDER MYSELF TO GOD'S GRACE!
AS *ALL* CHRISTIANS MUST.
uhgh... GOOD *CHRIST*...

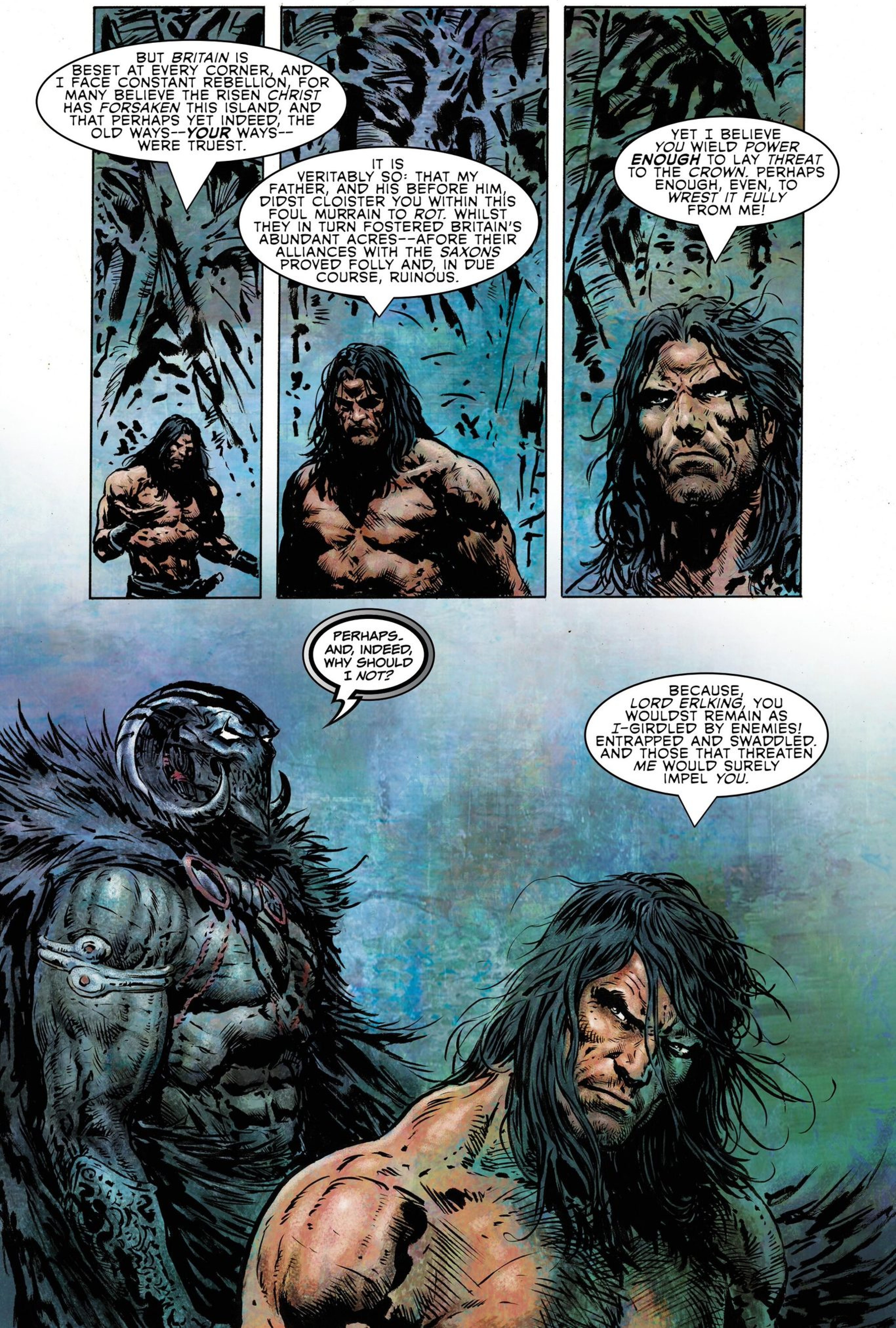

I AM HARDLY THAT.

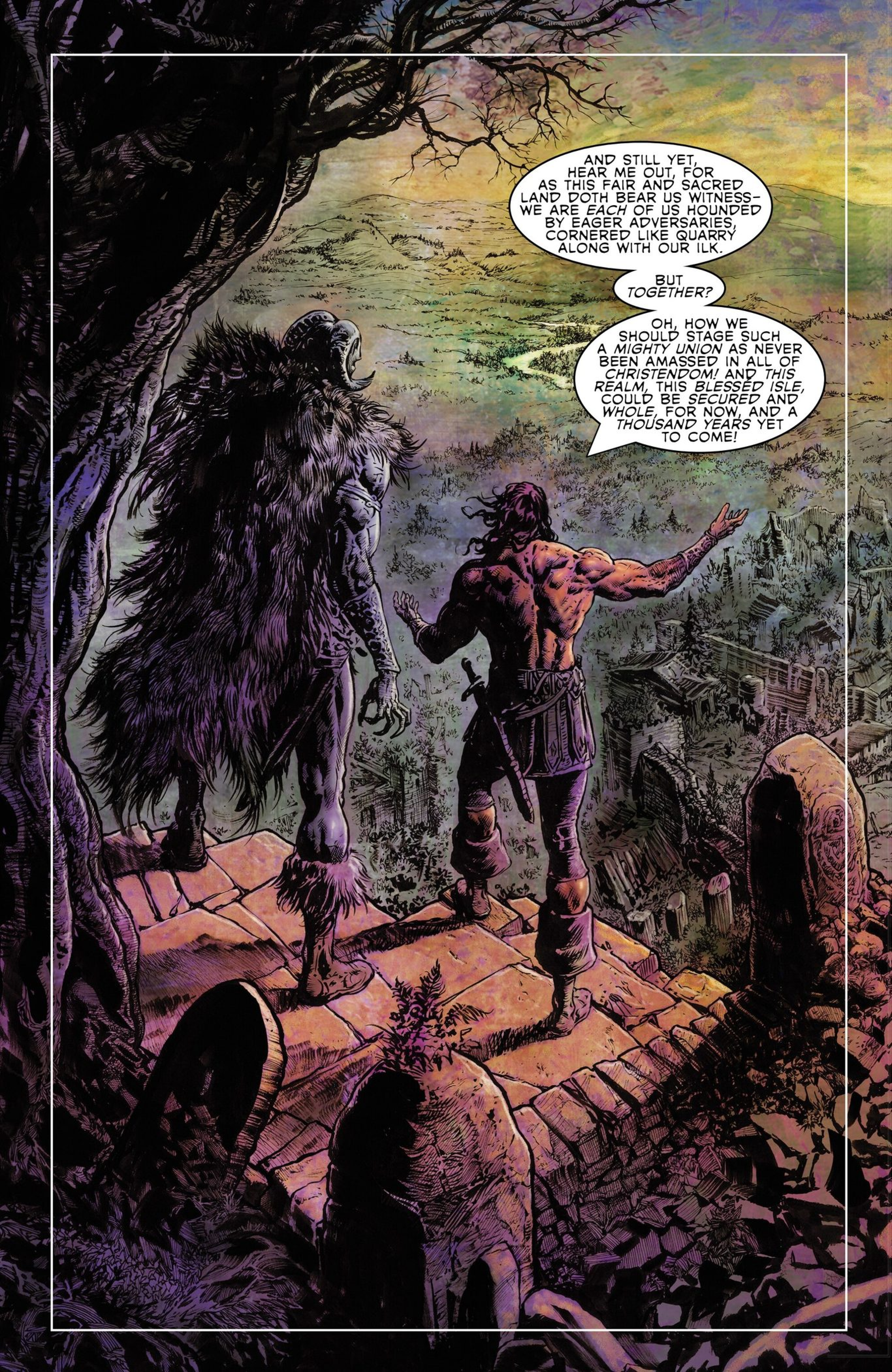

FOBDOWN, 479AD
YOU PAID A WEIGHTY TOLL, DEAR FRIEND, THOUGH YOU PUT AN END TO A LEGION OF HOWLING, DAMNED SOULS, WHO NOW BROIL IN HELLFIRE!
YOU SHOULD REST.
HA! WHAT PRICE A HAND, GOOD KING? I WOULD GLADLY GIVE MY *WHOLE ARM* TO WATCH THE BESPAWLING SAXON DEW-BEATERS FLEE ANEW!
WOULD THAT THEY *HAD* FLED, BUT THE SAXONS ARE NO LUBBERWORTS, AND THAT WAS *NOT* FLIGHT.
THEY WERE ASSAYING US, ATILIUS. SEEKING OUT OUR FRAILTIES. NOTHING MORE.
OUR CENTRAL *PHALANX* STOOD FIRM, BUT OUR FLANKS WERE EASILY RUN-THROUGH. THEY DID *NOT* FLEE.
MY KING--
DO YOU THEN THINK THEY'LL ATTACK *AGAIN?*

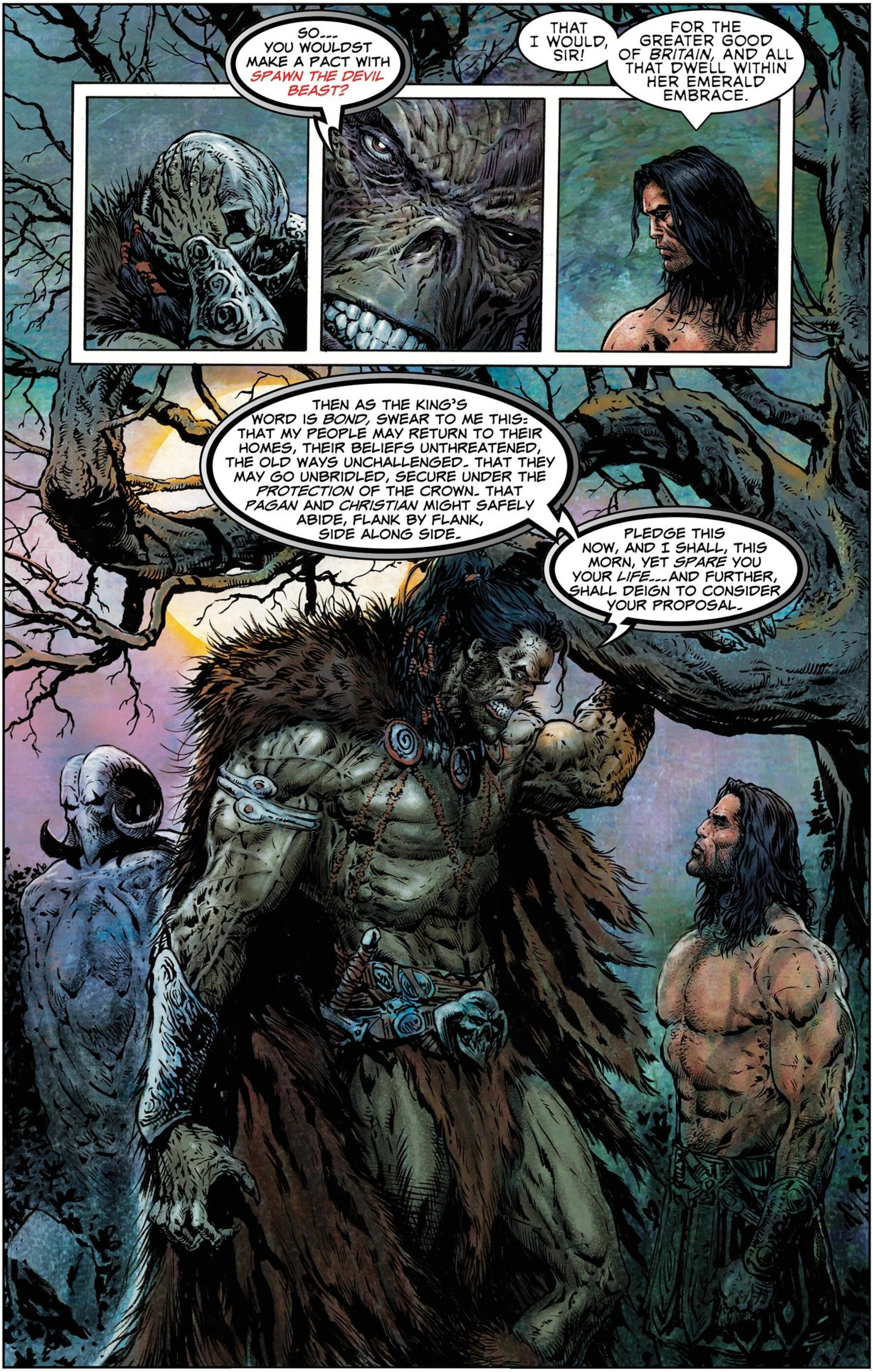

LIKELY NOT AFORE THEY HAVE DEVISED A MEANS TO BREACH OUR SHIELD WALL.
OUR WAYS OF WAR HAVE THRIVEN SINCE THE DAYS OF PHILIP THE MACEDON, BUT I'M AFEARED WE MAY YET FACE DEFEAT SHOULD WE PERPETUATE SUCH AN ANCIENT TACK.
SIRE! WORD FROM *WALES!*
KING GILOMANIUS DISPATCHED RAIDERS FROM *HIBERNIA.* THEY HAVE LAIN WASTE TO THE VILLAGES SOUTH OF *CARDIFF.* MANY WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE STOLEN AWAY.
SARD! SHALL THERE BE NO RESPITE?
PICTS BESIEGE US IN THE NORTH. FROM THE EAST, *SAXONS,* AND THE WEST, *HIBERNIANS!* HOW DO I SAFEGUARD MY KINGDOM, *ATILIUS?*
YOU'LL FIND A MEANS, MY LORD. I *KNOW* YOU. YOUR PEOPLE LOVE YOU. THE LORD, OUR GOD, ATTENDS YOU! HAVE *FAITH,* MY KING!
I PRAY YOU ARE RIGHT, DEAR FRIEND! WE MUST RETURN TO THE SEAT OF THE CROWN, IN *WINCHESTER.*

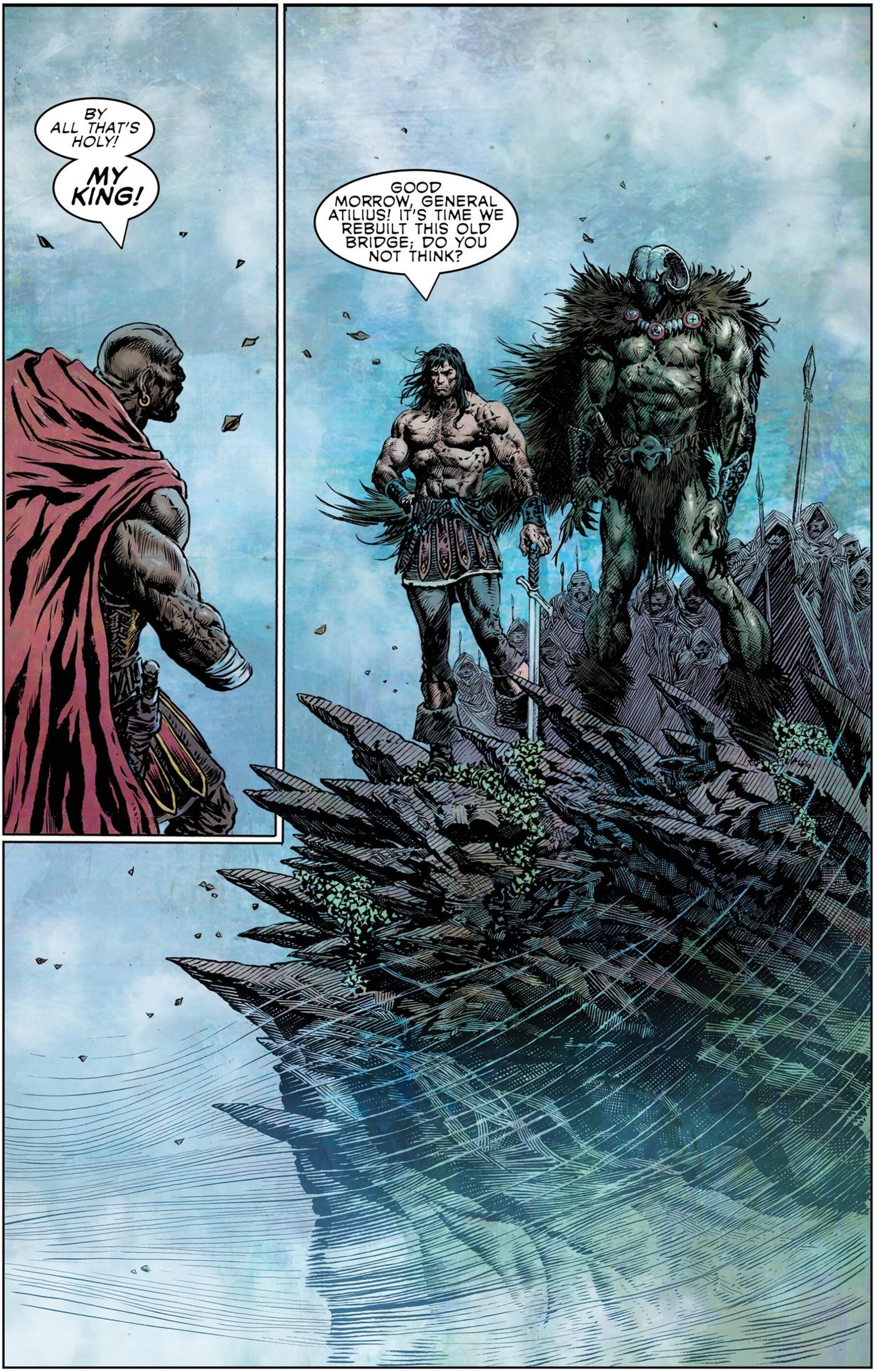

LONDINIUM, 479AD
WHAT INSANITY AFFLICTS ME, VILE *DEOFOL?*
LET FALL YOUR SWORD. I HAVE NO WISH TO KILL YOU.
IF YOU BE THE *ERLKING YULGRAVE,* KNOWN AS *'DEVIL SPAWN',* I SEEK ONLY TO FASHION A PACT WITH YOU, SIR...
I HAVE HAD MANY NAMES, THOUGH IT MATTERS LITTLE ENOUGH.
WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS *'PACT'* YOU SO PETITION?
YOU ARE THE *LORD OF THE WILD HUNT!* AS LONG AS ***YOU*** RIDE THERE CAN NE'ER BE HARMONY IN *GRAN BRITANNIA.* AND YET, IN ALL TRUTH, YOU AND I *SHARE* MANY A COMMON FOE. IT IS ABOUT *THIS* THAT WE MUST CONFER.

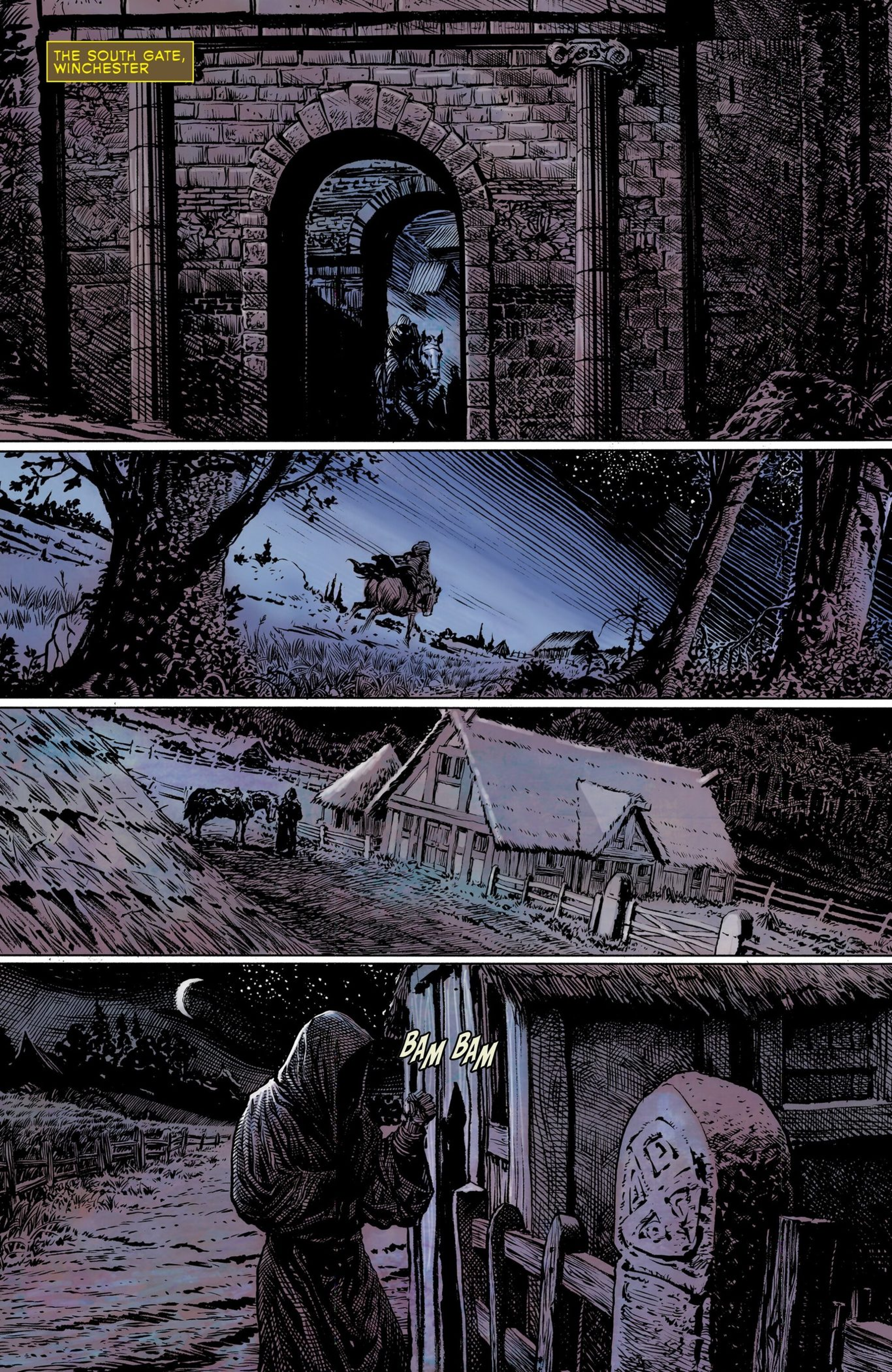

I AM THE LAST OF THE *TRUE*. GUARDIAN OF THE PAST. WHY SHOULD YOU AND I NOT ***FOREVER*** REMAIN MORTAL ENEMIES?
ERLKING, DREAD-LORD OF THIS FALLEN CITY OF THE DAMNED AND DEAD...
"...YOUR WILDING HUNTS SPREAD TERROR AMONGST MY PEOPLE. THEY SHUTTER THEIR DOORS, QUAKING IN THE GRIM-GLOOM OF THEIR NIGHT HORROR. PRAYING YOU WILL SPARE THEM, AND NOT SPIRIT THEM AWAY... AFEARED OF AN ETERNAL GODLESS FUTURE AS A LISTLESS *WRAITH*, FOREVER HAUNTING THE WUTHERING THOROUGHFARES OF ANCIENT *LONDINIUM*"

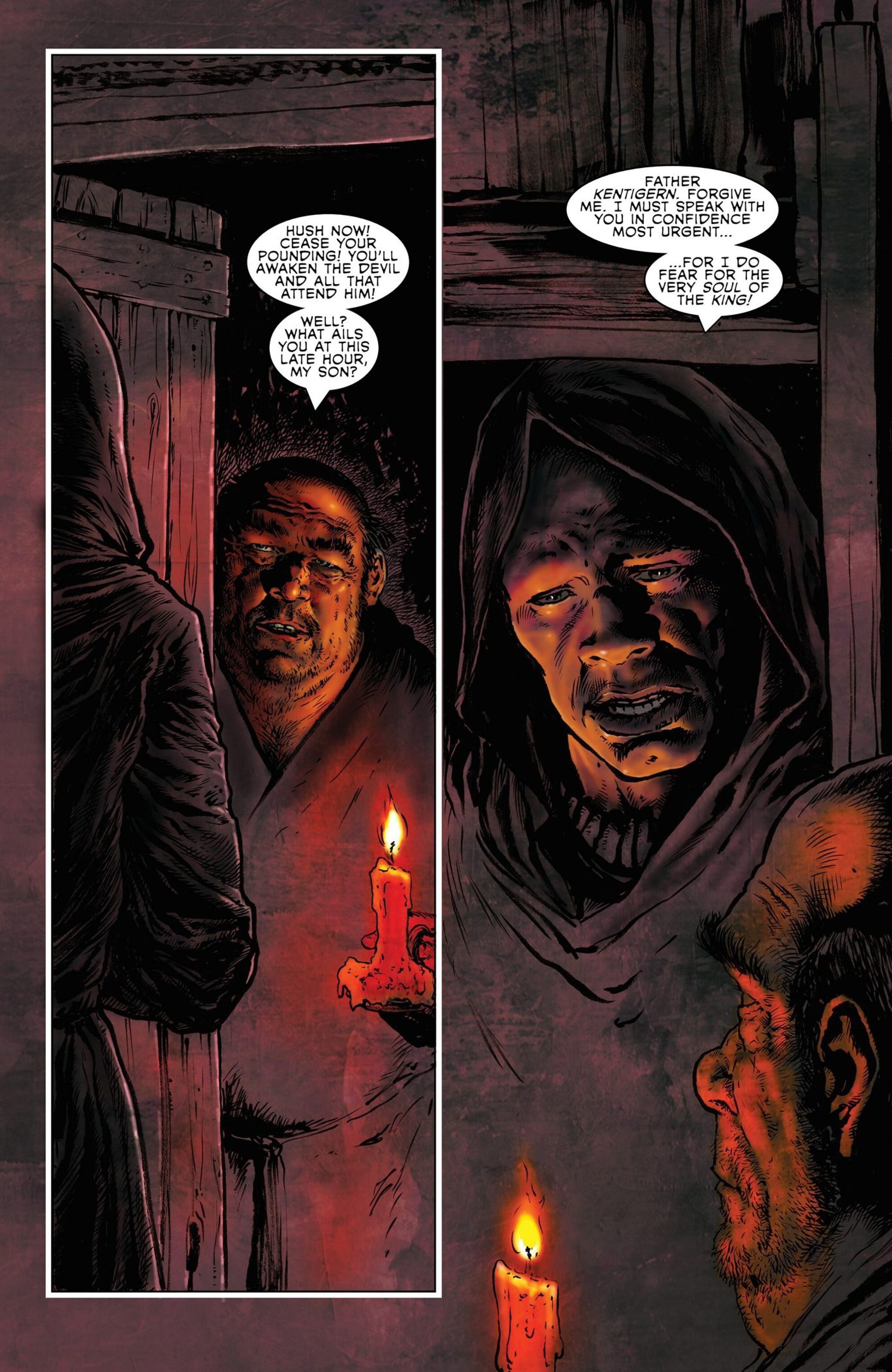

BUT *BRITAIN* IS BESET AT EVERY CORNER, AND I FACE CONSTANT REBELLION, FOR MANY BELIEVE THE RISEN *CHRIST* HAS *FORSAKEN* THIS ISLAND, AND THAT PERHAPS YET INDEED, THE OLD WAYS--***YOUR*** WAYS--WERE TRUEST.
IT IS VERITABLY SO: THAT MY FATHER, AND HIS BEFORE HIM, DIDST CLOISTER YOU WITHIN THIS FOUL MURRAIN TO *ROT*. WHILST THEY IN TURN FOSTERED BRITAIN'S ABUNDANT ACRES--AFORE THEIR ALLIANCES WITH THE *SAXONS* PROVED FOLLY AND, IN DUE COURSE, RUINOUS.
YET I BELIEVE *YOU* WIELD *POWER* **ENOUGH** TO LAY *THREAT* TO THE *CROWN*. PERHAPS ENOUGH, EVEN, TO *WREST IT FULLY* FROM ME!
PERHAPS. AND, INDEED, WHY SHOULD I *NOT*?
BECAUSE, *LORD ERLKING*, YOU WOULDST REMAIN AS *I*--GIRDLED BY ENEMIES! ENTRAPPED AND SWADDLED. AND THOSE THAT THREATEN *ME* WOULD SURELY IMPEL *YOU*.


AND STILL YET, HEAR ME OUT, FOR AS THIS FAIR AND SACRED LAND DOTH BEAR US WITNESS-WE ARE *EACH* OF US HOUNDED BY EAGER ADVERSARIES, CORNERED LIKE QUARRY ALONG WITH OUR ILK.
BUT *TOGETHER?*
OH, HOW WE SHOULD STAGE SUCH A *MIGHTY UNION* AS NEVER BEEN AMASSED IN ALL OF *CHRISTENDOM!* AND *THIS REALM*, THIS *BLESSED ISLE*, COULD BE *SECURED* AND *WHOLE*, FOR NOW, AND A *THOUSAND YEARS* YET TO COME!


SO... YOU WOULDST MAKE A PACT WITH *SPAWN THE DEVIL BEAST?*
THAT I WOULD, SIR!
FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF *BRITAIN*, AND ALL THAT DWELL WITHIN HER EMERALD EMBRACE.
THEN AS THE KING'S WORD IS *BOND*, SWEAR TO ME THIS: THAT MY PEOPLE MAY RETURN TO THEIR HOMES, THEIR BELIEFS UNTHREATENED, THE OLD WAYS UNCHALLENGED. THAT THEY MAY GO UNBRIDLED, SECURE UNDER THE *PROTECTION* OF THE CROWN. THAT *PAGAN* AND *CHRISTIAN* MIGHT SAFELY ABIDE, FLANK BY FLANK, SIDE ALONG SIDE.
PLEDGE THIS NOW, AND I SHALL, THIS MORN, YET *SPARE* YOU YOUR *LIFE*... AND FURTHER, SHALL DEIGN TO CONSIDER YOUR PROPOSAL.


BY ALL THAT'S HOLY!
MY KING!
GOOD MORROW, GENERAL ATILIUS! IT'S TIME WE REBUILT THIS OLD BRIDGE; DO YOU NOT THINK?


THE SOUTH GATE,
WINCHESTER
BAM BAM


HUSH NOW! CEASE YOUR *POUNDING!* YOU'LL AWAKEN THE DEVIL AND ALL THAT ATTEND HIM!
WELL? WHAT AILS YOU AT THIS LATE HOUR, MY SON?
FATHER *KENTIGERN.* FORGIVE ME. I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU IN CONFIDENCE MOST URGENT...
...FOR I DO FEAR FOR THE VERY *SOUL* OF THE *KING!*

Spawn: The Dark Ages - Glossary

Ambrosius Aurelianus – The inspiration for Arthur, sometimes cited as the brother of Uther, and even the template for Merlin, but in this version he is the last of the great Roman leaders in Britain.

Barritus – A notorious scream made by Roman soldiers as they charged into battle, that was meant to be blood-curdling!

Bespawling – Slobbering.

Christendom – The name for most of Europe during the Middle Ages, centering around Rome.

Danunnos – Combination of Danu, the goddess associated with the Tuatha Dé Danann (Irish Faeries) and the land, and Cernunnos, the horned Celtic god associated with nature and death.

Dark Earth – From around the time that Londinium (London) was abandoned, during the period in which this story occurs, scientists discovered what they have since called 'dark earth' in this and other similar locations. Caused by generations of the semi-primitive population's waste being cast out and absorbed into the earth beneath these areas - becoming a kind of super-fertilizer - it has been speculated that trees and forests grew over them at an incredible rate, and up to three times their normal size.

Deofol – Old English for Devil.

Dew-beater – Coward, as in 'beating the dew in the grass with their feet' as they run away!

Fae – Faeries.

Folde – Earth.

Gilomanius – Irish King.

Hibernia – Ireland.

I'faith – Indeed, truly.

Londinium – Ancient Roman London. In the fifth century it was in a state of ruin, and largely abandoned. It is reported that the Saxons believed it was haunted.

Lubberwort – Lethargic, stupid, or slow-minded.

Muc – Pig (Celtic).

Murrain – A place of pestilence and disease.

Oak-Knower – A hypothetical proto-Celtic word may be reconstructed as *dru-wid-s* (pl. *druwides*) meaning "oak-knower".

SPAWN CROSSOVER *GEIGER*
RECKLESS EAST OF WEST I KILL GIANTS
THE WALKING DEAD I HATE FAIRYLAND
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH *SEX CRIMINALS*
KILLADELPHIA *SAVAGE DRAGON* BATTLE CHASERS
PRETTY DEADLY BLACK SCIENCE THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
MONSTRESS CHEW *SWEET PAPRIKA* GIDEON FALLS
MOONSTRUCK UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY SKYWARD OBLIVION SONG
DESCENDER *PAPER GIRLS* THE OLD GUARD
INVINCIBLE WANTED *BITTER ROOT*
STRAY DOGS WHAT'S THE FURTHEST PLACE FROM HERE SNOTGIRL
SAGA *KICK-ASS* WITCHBLADE *ISOLA* INKBLOT
GOD COUNTRY
FIRE POWER
HAPPY!
LITTLE BIRD RAT QUEENS
ICE CREAM MAN
DEADLY CLASS
CRIMINAL *NOCTERRA* DIE
JUPITER'S LEGACY
RADIANT BLACK
DECORUM *BITCH PLANET*
MIDDLEWEST

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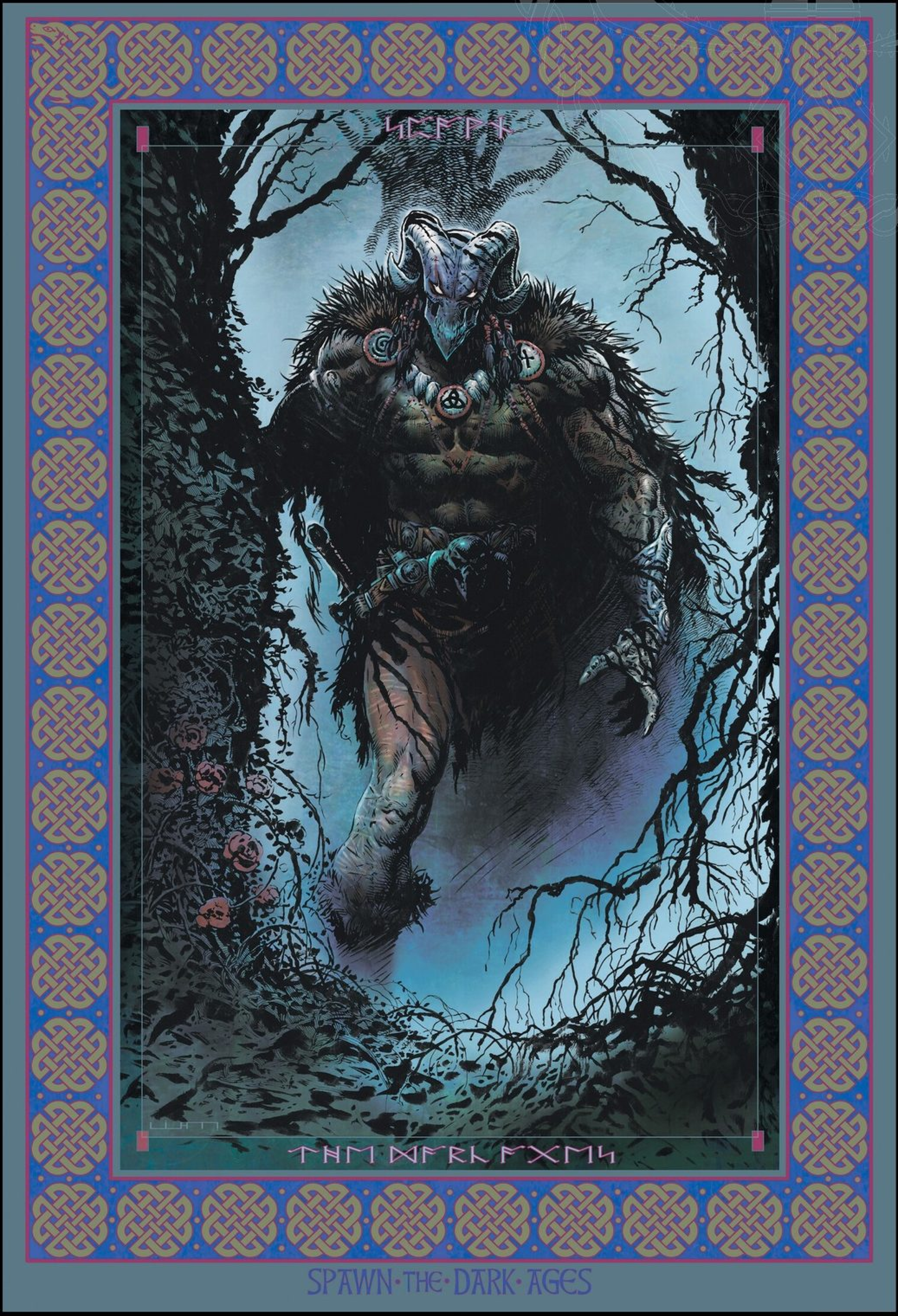
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